

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8265

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR PA

SUBJ: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. SECURITY AT ASUNCION'S ONLY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PRESIDENT STROESSNER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, IS DEFICIENT PRIMARILY DUE TO INADEQUATE SCREENING OF PASSENGERS. PASSENGERS OF SOME FLIGHTS ARE SCREENED, BUT THE SCREENING IS NOT THOROUGH. NO AREA IS AVAILABLE IN WHICH TO SEGREGATE SCREENED AND IN-TRANSIT PASSENGERS FROM OTHER PEOPLE WHILE THEY AWAIT THEIR FLIGHT. WHEN SCREENING IS DONE, IT IS ACCOMPLISHED HURRIEDLY, IMMEDIATELY BEFORE FLIGHT TIME.

2. IN VIEW OF THIS SITUATION EMBASSY OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY DISCUSSED WITH OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF AIRPORT SECURITY, WITH PARTICULAR STRESS ON THE NEED FOR A SCREENING AREA. THE MOST RECENT APPROACH WAS MADE TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION ON SEP 7. HE TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WAS MEETING SOON WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE AIRPORT TO DISCUSS SECURITY AGAINST TERRORIST ATTACKS. HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF

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PROVIDING BETTER SECURITY, CITING UNAVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

3. DIRECTOR GENERAL POINTED OUT THAT PLANS FOR NEW TERMINAL BUILDING, NOW BEING CONSTRUCTED NEAR PRESENT TERMINAL, CONTAIN ADQUATE SECURITY PROVISIONS, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE AREAS FOR SEGREGATION OF SCREENED PASSENGERS. (POST OFFICIALS, REPRESENTATIVES OF BRANIFF INTERNATIONAL AIRWAYS, AS WELL AS WILLIAM L RACH, AVIATION SECURITY SPECIALIST, FAA, HAVE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED PLANS FOR THE NEW TERMINAL IN DEPTH AND HAVE FOUND THEM TO CONTAIN PROVISIONS FOR SEGREGATING SCREENED PASSENGERS. POST OFFICIALS ARE RECONTACTING APPROPRIATE GOP PERSONNEL TO VERIFY THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS PREVIOUSLY INCLUDED IN THE PLANS HAVE NOT BEEN DELETED.) POST BELIEVES GOP IS UNWILLING TO INVEST ADDITIONAL FUNDS IN THE PRESENTLY USED TERMINAL BUILDING. THE NEW TERMINAL IS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION AT THE END OF 1977.

4. ACCORDING TO PARAGUAYAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PARAGUAY AHS SIGNED AND RATIFIED THE 1970 HAGUE AND 1971 MONTREAL CONVENTIONS.

5. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO RECOMMEND TRAINING PARAGUAYANS IN AIRPORT SECURITY AT PRESENT. THE HEAD OF AIRPORT SECURITY, SUB-COMISSARIO ATRILIO GONZALEZ BRITEZ, HAS BEEN GIVEN SOME TRAINING BY FAA REPRESENTATIVES DURING TWO VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES. IN NOVEMBER 1974 HE RECEIVED A DEMONSTRATION OF SECURITY PREOCEDURES IN EFFECT AT MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT; IN MAY 1976 HE RECEIVED SIMILAR INSTRUCTION AT JOHN F KENNEDY, NATIONAL AND DULLES AIRPORTS. IN ADDITION, HE MEETS FREQUENTLY WITH THE RSO TO DISCUSS SECURITY PROBLEMS.

6. EMBASSY IS SCHEDULING ADDITIONAL CONVERSATIONS VJ NEXT WEEK WITH BOTH HEAD OF AIRPORT SECURITY AND WITH DIRECTOR OF ASUNCION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.
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